

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF  
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: FRANK M. GARDNER  
(Willesden Public Libraries)

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## The Library Assistant ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE next meeting will be held jointly with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association at the Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, on 13th March, at 6.30 p.m. The proceedings will open in the meeting-room of the Institute with a symposium of five short papers on "Branch library planning," by Mr. E. Sydney, Miss A. S. Cooke, Mr. C. E. M. Baker, Mr. J. E. Walker, and Capt. R. Wright, who will describe Branch Libraries for whose preparation and inauguration they have been individually responsible. The papers will be illustrated by plans and photographs, and will be followed by a discussion. At the end of the meeting members will have an opportunity of inspecting the Institute's new building, and Mr. E. J. Carter, the Librarian, will explain and describe the many interesting new features of the library.

Wednesday evening social programmes are as follows:

- 6th March.—8 p.m. Talk on architecture by Mr. S. W. Martin, illustrated by lantern slides.
- 20th March.—8 p.m. Programme provided by the Paddington Public Libraries Staff in conjunction with the School of Librarianship Old Students' Association.
- 27th March.—7.45–12 p.m. Dance. Tickets, 2s., from Mr. W. C. Pugsley, Branch Library, High Road, Chadwell Heath.
- 3rd April.—8 p.m. "Mountview merry-go-round," by the 'Ornsey 'Ornets.

The meeting at Chaucer House on 13th February was the annual occasion on which a provincial member is thrust into the arena among the London members. It is noticeable on these occasions that the said provincial members usually begin by proclaiming themselves as quite unworthy, and then proceed to emit fire from both nostrils. Mr. Sellick, representing the South Wales Division, made the inevitable disclaimer, but his fire for once was not directed at us. A sound and constructive paper appeared to cause pain only to the few county librarians present, and Mr. Sellick had very little to answer in the subsequent discussion. Mr. A. R. Hewitt presided most ably in the absence of Mr. Seymour Smith, and Mr. Oliph Smith, though itching to say more than courtesy allowed, proposed a most polished vote of thanks which was heartily accorded.

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*Election of London Councillor.*—The result of the election, held at the February meeting, for a councillor to fill the casual vacancy on the London side, was as follows: Mr. T. I. M. Clulow, 121; Mr. B. Oliph Smith, 42; Mr. D. E. Coult, 22. Mr. Clulow was duly elected.

### *The Library Association Examinations. December 1934. Summary*

Elementary: 268 candidates sat; 102 passed (3 with merit).  
Intermediate Part I: 362 candidates sat; 90 passed (1 with merit).  
Intermediate Part II: 203 candidates sat; 43 passed.  
Final Part I: 17 candidates sat; 12 passed (2 with merit).  
Final Part I (c): 3 candidates sat; 2 passed.  
Final Part II: 57 candidates sat; 26 passed (1 with merit).  
Final Part III: 33 candidates sat; 14 passed (1 with merit).  
Languages: 78 candidates sat; 39 passed (10 with merit).  
1,021 candidates sat; 328 passed. Percentage of passes, 32 per cent.

### LIBRARY ASSOCIATION SUMMER SCHOOL, 1935—PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Sixth Annual Summer School of Librarianship, arranged by the Library Association in co-operation with the University of Birmingham and the Birmingham Public Libraries Committee, will be held in Birmingham from 12th to 24th August, 1935.

Students will reside at Chancellor's Hall (a University Hall of Residence), Edgbaston, Birmingham. The Hall stands in extensive grounds, which include lawns and gardens, hard tennis courts, putting greens, five courts, etc. All amenities at the Hall will be at the disposal of students. Charges for board residence will be £5 8s. for the period of the school; £3 3s. for one week; 10s. 6d. per day.

The fee for instruction will be 15s. for the fortnight period; 10s. for a period of one week; 2s. for day courses.

The Scheme of Studies will be based on the new syllabus of the Library Association, and will include: Bibliography and Book Selection; English Dramatic Literature; Classification; Cataloguing; Library Administration, including Children's Libraries and Commercial and Technical Libraries; County Libraries; Special Libraries; Library Planning; Printing; Bookbinding.

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Lectures will be held during the morning sessions, and demonstrations, practical work, and visits to libraries of different types, book binderies, printing and process-printing establishments will be arranged for the afternoon sessions.

Further details will be announced shortly.

Enquiries should be addressed to:

The Honorary Secretary,  
Library Association Summer School,  
Reference Library,  
Birmingham, 1.

## CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

### COURSES, SUBJECTS, AND FEES

The Correspondence Courses comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints and advice on study and practical work, and questions or subjects for essays upon which the Tutor will write comments or corrections.

Courses, in all sections, are arranged each season to run from April to May of the following year, and from November to December of the following year. The subjects treated, and the respective fees for each section, are as set out below:

*Elementary Section.*—The course covers the whole of the Library Association requirements for this section. Fee, £1 13s.

*Intermediate Section.*—Part 1, Library Classification; Part 2, Library Cataloguing. Total inclusive fee, £2 5s. Either section may, however, be taken separately for a fee of £1 6s. 6d.

*Final Section.*—Part 1, English Literary History—fee, £1 13s. Part 2, Bibliography and Book Selection and Historical Bibliography—fee, £2 3s. 6d. Part 3, Advanced Library Administration, including either of the specialized alternatives—fee, £2 3s. 6d.

*Any person not a member of the Association may take the above courses, but at double the above-mentioned fees.*

The use of standard exercise notebooks and postage wrappers is now made compulsory, and the above fees are inclusive of a sufficient supply for each course.

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### APPLICATIONS

Students wishing to enter for any Course must obtain an application form from and return it, together with the necessary fee, to MR. S. W. MARTIN, CARNEGIE LIBRARY, HERNE HILL ROAD, LONDON, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses respectively. AFTER THESE DATES NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED.

*Note.*—No student will receive any part of a course until at least one week after the closing dates for applications.



### PRONOUNCEMENTS

THE Joint Code of cataloguing rules is usually held to cover most possible kinds of book, and students conscientiously learning the rule for dissertations have been known to assert that it covers more kinds than it need. But a little book recently published seems to show that the march of progress may even affect cataloguing rules. The book is the "shooting script" of the film *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, published by Methuen at 3s. 6d. It is described on the title-pages THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII/ DIRECTED BY ALEXANDER KORDA/ STORY AND DIALOGUE BY LAJOS BIRO AND ARTHUR WIMPERIS/ PRODUCED BY LONDON FILM PRODUCTIONS/ EDITED BY ERNEST BETTS.

The question is, under what name is the main entry for the book to go? Cataloguing the book as a play, the authors are of course Lajos Biro and Arthur Wimperis. But considerably more than half of the book is not dialogue at all, but shooting directions. Alexander Korda, then, is surely the main person responsible for the book. But, then, what of the producing company?

Even if one decides the writers of the dialogue are the authors, what would one do with a scenario of Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, which has no dialogue to speak of, or the usual American film, which has no single dialogue writer? If many more books of this kind are produced, it seems that an addition to the cataloguing code will be necessary. The question is, of course, more amusing than important, but a pronouncement from some cataloguing authority might be useful.

S. G. S.

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# REGIONALIZATION AND THE REFERENCE LIBRARY<sup>1</sup>

ELLIS SELICK

I HAVE been told that in the days of the A.L.A., Divisional Hon. Secretaries could always rely on two subjects to evoke an acrimonious discussion. They were "Open access" and "The Newsroom." Some day, I may be able to tell juniors of that hoary old chestnut of co-operation and the part I played in the great struggle. My only hope is that they will not emulate little Peterkin.

It is a curious fact that any mention of a "Regional Scheme" provokes a person into either lyrical praise or violent antagonism. It is not my purpose here to fish for either.

The arguments for and against the "Regional Schemes" are well known, and I should be boring you as much as myself if I reiterated them here to-night. It is just over a year ago that the third of an entertaining if somewhat heated series of articles on "Co-operation" appeared in THE ASSISTANT. I do not intend to supply the fourth. Indeed, I doubt if I am capable of so doing, nor do I desire to survey the present position. May I make the suggestion, however, that it is altogether desirable that, after fifteen years' experience of the working of the Central Library for Students, later the National Central Library, and five years of the Regional Bureaux, we should have an authoritative exposition of this most important development in librarianship.

A marked characteristic of an Englishman, so it is said, is that he never knows where he is going, he just blunders through. As a Welshman I entirely agree, only I would add, that an English librarian not only is unaware of his destination, but also that he does not know where he is when he gets there. This was particularly true in relation to the attractive phrase "Library co-operation." Such phrases as "To every man his book," later qualified to "To every student his book" and "A complete catalogue of every book in an area" were uttered. However admirable these ideals, they will remain ideals—to a large extent incapable of realization.

At the present moment there are six Regional Bureaux, backed by the resources of the National Central Library, covering the whole of England and Wales with the exception of the South-western area.

In few of these areas, if any, was any preliminary survey made, and the

<sup>1</sup> A paper delivered at a meeting at Chaucer House, 13th February, 1935.

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effects of library inter-lending calculated. The Bureaux cover all kinds of libraries: municipal, large and small, university, county and special, or, if you like, good, bad, and indifferent. It does not matter if in one part of the area the library expenditure is 2s. 4d. per head of the population and in another part 4d. Both will help each other, although one would expect even a librarian to realize who would do the bulk of the helping. No effect was made to restrict the activities of the Bureaux to active libraries.

It should have been obvious that the large libraries would do all the lending, while the small and badly stocked libraries would do all the borrowing. Yet for some quixotic reason, it was decided to levy subscriptions, not according to the number of books borrowed, but according to the population served by the individual libraries. During the last few months, I have read practically every published article on "Co-operation," but I have yet to read a reason why this illogical system of levying subscriptions was initiated. I am fully aware that the strong should assist the weak, but surely another word than "Co-operation" is needed for a scheme, whereby for the sum of £10 one library borrows 100 books and lends 1,000, while for £3 another library lends 10 and borrows 100.

It is evident that, even within the most logical regional areas, 90 per cent. of the loans are confined to two or three of the larger libraries. But I intend to return to this point later.

For the moment I must crave the indulgence of the county librarians. I cannot see how they can co-operate in any Regional Scheme, although their need of assistance is greater than that of the municipal libraries. I have analysed the reports of three Regional Bureaux and I find that in one area two counties borrowed between them 21 per cent. of the total loans; in the second area one county borrowed 28 per cent. of the total loans; in the third area five counties borrowed between them 25 per cent. of the total loans.

Also the County Libraries borrow approximately 40 per cent. of the books lent through the National Central Library.

The Counties generally are unable to provide any substantial service to the student. They lack the support and service of a Reference Library. In return for the provision of such a service, what can they offer? Frankly, nothing. Analyse the reports of any Regional Bureau, and you will find that the Counties borrow most and lend least.

I am aware that the county librarians themselves are cognizant with the reasons for this state of affairs, and in fairness to them I must quote from the

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report of the County Libraries' Section on Regional Libraries, issued in 1928. Under the heading "Regional Grouping," the report states:

"Before considering any question of regional grouping, it must be realized that local libraries are maintained entirely from local funds. Hence it is difficult to make a case for any authority departing from its insularity, unless it is going to receive some benefit by so doing. Moreover, an authority could not be expected to lend books to other authorities unless they were expending . . . the same amount per head of population on book supply."

Unfortunately, the Counties are the most backward in this respect, and until this is remedied, the County Libraries cannot be anything else but a drag on the Municipal Libraries.

Regarding the small Municipal Libraries, those serving a population between 5,000-20,000, I suggest it is advisable that most of them should be linked up, not with the County Library, but with adjacent large or average-size Municipal Libraries. There is a greater community of interest between them, and the demands upon the stock of a Municipal Library are not so intense as those upon the generally impoverished stocks of the County Libraries.

Surely the inception of the Regional Schemes offering immense benefits to the County and small Municipal Libraries was a golden opportunity of forcibly persuading these systems to raise their book expenditures?

The Regional Schemes are endeavouring to provide a similar service as is obtainable in a large Municipal Library to the County and small library. The almost unlimited resources of the larger libraries are supplementing the limited resources of the small libraries. Once you eliminate all requests for inexpensive new books and stock that any library worthy of the name should possess, you will find that 80 per cent. of the demands of the Bureaux is met from the Reference Library or reserve stock. And this is as it should be.

I do not intend to enter into any controversy of the nature of books that should be lent through a Regional Scheme. That depends entirely upon the mentality of the librarian, whether his library is situated in a university town, and upon local demands. I cannot, however, perceive any municipal librarian being willing to lend a copy of the current Municipal Year-book. But the whole nature of the Reference Library has changed during the last few years. Gone has the axiom that a book in the Reference Library is a book solely to be referred to.

I have heard the Reference Library described as the place where a person,



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too well bred to frequent the Newsroom, can have an undisturbed sleep. Such a definition, I regret to say, is applicable to many so-called Reference Libraries I have visited. To many pseudo-librarians of the past it must have appeared to be one of the things-that-are-done to place in one small room a few tables and uncomfortable chairs, to fill a few book-cases, usually glass fronted and bought at an auction, with donations which no one would ever dream of consulting, and label the whole with the grandiloquent title of "Reference Library." A few months ago I was present at the re-opening of a library in a town of approximately 50,000 population. The Lending Library and Newsroom were excellently organized, but the misnamed Reference Library had survived to the exclusion of a possible Children's Library. This Reference Library was badly stocked, and on enquiry I learned that no demand for a separate room for reference work and study existed, and none was being created.

Just before Christmas I was in another town where the library was in a converted corner shop and house, and I regret to say that here the Reference Library was placed in the bathroom.

Such a position is symptomatic of many small towns. Reference Library service, in its real sense, is confined to our large towns and cities.

I believe it is essential that every Municipal Library should possess a separate Reference Department, and should stress the importance of this phase of public library methods. In no department is more careful book selection required. I believe I am correct, in quoting Mr. Jast, in saying that every library should be judged on its reference collection, yet a considerable number of reasonably sized libraries are constantly requesting the loan of such books as *Whitaker's almanac*, 1932, and the National Central Library itself is guilty of passing on such requests to the outlier libraries.

I said that a Reference Library book is no longer considered solely as a book that is consulted in the library. What, you may ask, then, is a Reference Library book? For a satisfactory definition I am afraid you must wait until a "Dictionary of librarianship" is published. It has been defined as "a book that primarily is used for consultative purposes," but it is obvious that all books, whatever their nature, can, at some time or other, be used for such purposes. Besides, such works as encyclopædias, year-books, surveys, such monumental works as Sowerley's *Botany*, or the *Genera insectorum*, definitive editions of standard authors, and such authoritative textbooks as Strasburger's *Botany* must comprise the stock of any Reference Library.

The criterion which prevails in many places, and to my mind it is a bad

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ruling, is that if a book costs more than a certain sum, it automatically goes in the Reference Library.

May I, in passing, suggest that a select list of reference books, graduated for inclusion according to the size of libraries, should be issued?

It is generally conceded, I believe, that there has evolved two distinct types of Reference Libraries. Whether you designate them as "workshop" and "museum" or "laboratory" and "repository" matters little, although personally I prefer the second of these alternatives, as every book, however apparently worthless, has a potential value. It is obvious that the Municipal Libraries in our cities have become, to a certain extent, semi-national libraries, and will tend to become more so.

The reason for this is due, not only to the immensely large book expenditure on the larger Municipal Reference Libraries, but also to the librarian's experience that withdrawn books from the Lending Libraries are often of immense value to the Reference Library. Consequently, a reserve stock of what are by no means reference books, in the strict sense, is built up. The librarian of the small Municipal Library quite rightly discards from his shelves out-of-date scientific books and works which are rarely used. Their value to this type of library is practically nil, and they are now only occupying valuable shelf-space.

Since the Reference Library of a small library consists, or should consist, of books that are quick reference works and reserve stocks are unknown and unwanted departments, the withdrawn books are generally added to the worn-out piles. Quite recently I went through a stack of such books, and found many which, although apparently worthless, are of the nature demanded through the Bureaux. An example is Wallis Tayler's *Aerial or wire-rope tramways*, published in 1893. You will agree that such a book, while being of no value to the "workshop" type of library, should be added to the "depository" library. Even out-of-date scientific books have a certain historical value, and one copy of as many works as possible should be kept in each Regional area. So-called stagnant stocks are potential reference books.

The demand for these books comes, not only from the locality in which these depository or semi-national libraries are situated, but also from the smaller and County Libraries. This, you remark, is the *raison d'être* of the Regional Schemes. I quite agree, and apart from minor abuses which lend themselves to distortion, the Regional Schemes are meeting this need. But it is met from one large library in each area. At the risk of boring you, I will

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quote some further figures which I obtained from an analysis of the reports of three Regional Bureaux:

1st Report: one library lends 83 per cent. of the total loans. 2nd Report: one library lends 82 per cent. of the total loans. 3rd Report: two libraries situated in one town between them lend 85 per cent. of the total loans.

These figures surely prove, not only that co-operation between libraries of greatly varying sizes in an area is a fallacy, but that the finance and energy spent in endeavouring to effect such co-operation is valueless. I am fully aware that, when the union catalogues are complete, it is the intention to draw upon the stocks of the smaller libraries to supply the demands of the Regional Bureaux, but I am reluctant to believe that requests will be sent to outlying libraries which could be met with a minimum of delay from the stocks of the library that houses the Bureaux. I cannot see the figures I have quoted greatly diminished even should the union catalogues ever be completed, and, what is of equal importance, kept up-to-date with withdrawals and additions.

Indeed, I believe it is a fact that the Committee of one Regional Bureau are contemplating the cessation of the compilation of their union catalogue, and you are all aware that the Committee of the most recently formed Bureau have decided, as yet, not to compile such a catalogue.

My own opinion, for such as it is worth, is that these catalogues should have been made, not comprehensive, but selective. Catalogues of the special collections listed in the Aslib Directory should certainly be available at the Headquarters of the various Bureaux, and it would not have entailed much research on the part of the various editors to have ascertained what other collections should be catalogued.

I suggest that the conclusion we can draw from the experience of the Regional Bureaux—and I say frankly that it is as yet a short experience—is that in the majority of the areas, already formed, there needs to be set up, as far as possible, one central stock, one depository library, from which the demands of the area shall be met. I am aware that this is in juxtaposition with the principle of "Library co-operation" enumerated by the first advocates of the Regional Schemes. But surely the principal aim behind this "regionalization" is that no longer shall a librarian say, "I am sorry, but the library does not possess a copy of the book," but that he shall say, "I am sorry the library does not possess a copy of the book, but I will endeavour to procure one from another library." How he does so does not matter, so long as it is done by legal methods; what does matter is that the borrower has the book.

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I am afraid that too often in library work we are worrying so much about the means that we forget the end.

Surely the work accomplished by the Regional Bureaux can be done, not by the complicated method of sending requests to the Bureau, where, after it is traced, it is transmitted to another library often with no result, but by following out the principle of establishing a Depository library or libraries in each area? This principle has been followed in the Yorkshire Regional Scheme, where the area is divided into four zones and the loaning of books confined to four major libraries.

The question immediately arises, "How can such Depository libraries be formed?" The subscriptions now levied from the constituent libraries in each area are swallowed up in administering the Bureau. Must these large libraries—these semi-national collections—not only subscribe, but also do all the loaning? Such a situation, however generous might be the administrators of these libraries, is unpalatable, and, I am sure, is not desired by the authorities of the smaller library systems.

We are realizing to-day that the growth of the library movement is not synonymous with the establishment of independent libraries, each building up its stock without regard for the others. There is a need for co-ordination, a welding together. Unfortunately, at the present time, this is entirely voluntary, and depends upon the co-operation of the individual authorities. But there is no limit set to such co-operation.

It is impossible to establish Depository libraries *de novo*. Such a procedure, however desirable, is too idealistic, and it would be probably fifty years before such libraries could properly function. Each small library, however, receiving benefit from the large library already situated in each area, should assist in building up its stock. Instead of the present narrow parochial system whereby individual libraries build up their stocks regardless of each other, competing for donations and records, let there be real co-operation, a consideration of the community as a whole, not in units. Instead of consigning "dead" books to the worn-out piles, by careful co-operative book selection such "dead" stock would enrich the Regional Library. Instead of retaining "museum" specimens in isolated parts of the country, they would be concentrated in one place.

Library co-operation has been defined as of two kinds: (a) internal economy, such as co-operative cataloguing and book selection, and (b) service to the public. Unfortunately, the second of these only has been emphasized, whereas they react upon each other. You cannot divorce the two, and until there is

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efficient co-operation between librarians in library economy, there cannot be efficient co-operation in the service of the public. The constitution of each Regional Bureau contains such a clause as, "The organization shall promote co-operation between the libraries in its area." Why not put this into actual practice, even to the extent of building up a regional depository library.

There is just one more phase of library co-operation I desire to touch upon. Approximately 5 per cent. of the requests to the Regional Bureaux, and also, I should imagine, to the National Central Library, concern periodical literature. While I agree that it is necessary for each library to take certain standard periodicals, there is no need to have half-a-dozen complete bound sets of the *Hibbert journal* in one area and not one set of *Mind* or the *Church quarterly*, or two sets of the *Labour monthly* and not one of the *Socialist review*. It would not entail much planning to share the lending of periodicals over the libraries in the Regional area, according to the local needs and income of each library. There would be thus ensured the preservation of the majority of the non-specialized periodicals in each area. In this connexion I would strongly advocate the compilation of a union catalogue, a copy of which should be placed in each library.

Finally, may I say something I should have made clear at the commencement of my address. I do not intend any of these remarks to apply to London. I appreciate your problem in London is entirely different from that in the provinces, and as a provincial member I would not presume to offer advice.



## AN ASSISTANT'S DIARY

### "SCRIPTOR"

15th January.—Asked to-day by Chief to look out for, in my reading of periodicals, etc., for books I think we ought to have, and which he is likely to have overlooked, and to hand him particulars thereof. Was very glad of, and encouraged by, this request, as I think all assistants should systematically help in book selection. It makes us feel we are doing something worth while. Know of one library where assistants, even some juniors, are allotted certain periodicals to go through, according to their qualifications. Thus, a musically-minded assistant is responsible for all reviews in *Musical times*, etc.; one interested in fine art has *Studio* and *The Connoisseur* as his province, and so on; while even such papers as *The Nation* and *The Spectator* are allotted to other

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members of the staff. I expect every librarian welcomes suggestions from his staff, but to have a definite task in the business is a totally different matter.

18th January.—In taking book out of local library, discovered that they now have space ruled on date label for the initial of intaking assistant. So fell to questioning as to whether this is good practice as well as good theory. Found they had been trying this for some time, but, in the assistants' opinions, of little practical value. For how can a poor assistant, in dealing with an inflow of a hundred or two books in a half-hour, as so often happens at busy periods, stop to initial each one legibly? And again, what if he can? What value have past delinquencies brought up against anyone? Is it possible to make a serious fault in taking in a book? Besides, the practice does not make for confidence and goodwill among the staff, but gives, I should think, perhaps unconsciously, some sense of suspicion and distrust. And this must hinder the ultimate flow of a good service. So think, after all, it is just a waste of space on the label.

25th January.—Heard this day, with some trepidation, that Committee have chosen a girl to replace junior recently left. This trepidation due, not to fear of female, but to the fact that, as I think by experience, there is surely something always in feminine nature that *expects*, sometimes unconsciously, but all too often consciously, a different treatment from that meted out to males in a like position. It is thus not so easy or natural for a boy and girl to work equally in same position. And how difficult for those in immediate authority to treat them exactly alike! Suppose a time *will* come when girls will realize that their cry for equality must be consistent in routine matters as well as in salary matters.

2nd February.—Arrival this morning of ASSISTANT with first instalment of Diary. Naturally wondered if all readers have noticed it, and what they are thinking. Could not but feel some pride at reading it again in print, but withal a sincere hope that it will be of help to all of us. So hope that others may be led to stir their lazy pens into action and let me know what reception Diary has, and, what is more important, to talk of those matters of which I write. Hope I shall be able, in this place, to promote discussion of, and interest in, the everyday work of us smaller fry in the profession. So, whatever any of you *think* about what I say, *write* it down, and let me have it, however trivial, or otherwise, it may seem.

4th February.—In conversation with borrower to-day, he told me that he was always afraid of asking us for help or advice, because we seemed busy,

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and could ill-afford to leave the counter and attend to his modest demands. Unfortunately, this is true in our case. Because Chief does not see the value of direct touch with the borrower in this respect, we are really understaffed. In the evening, if one of us has to leave the counter, the queue immediately grows, and is only got rid of with great difficulty a little later. Because there may not be enough routine work to occupy a larger staff *every* moment of our time, the service in this vastly important direction has to suffer. I sometimes doubt if the borrowers really come first in Chief's estimation. The Senior in charge should *always* have the time and opportunity to attend to borrower's needs, and he should be appointed with this in mind. A man who thinks that borrowers are more or less a nuisance is dangerous to his library's service in this position. And there *are* such assistants!

8th February.—Had several cases recently of borrowers getting a little confused with some of the Dewey numbers. I admit that such people are, as a rule, those with little education, but has not nearly every district a proportion of such persons? It seems very hard for us to understand, but there are some people to whom a decimal point turns a plain number into confusion. Have had experience with both Dewey and Brown, but never found this trouble with the latter. Though I prefer Dewey, for technical reasons alone, sometimes wonder if Brown is not better from the borrowers' view-point. After all, the alphabet is unconscious with us, and nobody often has to think whether K comes before or after M. True, there *are* decimals in Brown, but in an average-sized library they need seldom be used.

## A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

*Compulsory use of Official Exercise Books.*—In future all students entering for correspondence courses will be supplied with twelve exercise books to be used for the written work submitted to tutors for correction. The necessary wrappers for posting exercise books will also be supplied. The official exercise books *must* be used for all written work sent to tutors, and to cover the cost of the books and wrappers 1s. 6d has been added to the fees payable for the various courses. It is anticipated that the exercise books and wrappers will provide all the stationery required by a student in connexion with a correspondence course, so that the new arrangement should be an economy. In the past most students must have spent more than eighteenpence when purchasing the foolscap and envelopes necessary for a course.

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Most of the examiners' reports complain about untidy and slovenly work, and all tutors make similar charges. Half-pages from old note-books, thin typing paper (and even the backs of old envelopes) are from time to time used for answers in correspondence courses. Such materials usually result in untidy work and tend to create slovenly habits. Unnumbered loose pages are frequently sent to tutors, and it is sometimes necessary to compare the handwriting on several sheets to ascertain the student who sent them. At least a third of the students omit to write their name on the first page of a set of answers, and the only clue to the student's identity is the post-mark on the envelope.

The new exercise book and wrapper will weigh a fraction under 2 ounces, and will be available for the printed paper postal rate. This fact should commend the system to students. The conscientious will be saved a journey to the post office to find out if their monthly packets are within the limits of the halfpenny post; the light-hearted, who enclose 6 ounces of good "official" foolscap in a sealed envelope bearing a halfpenny stamp, will be prevented from inflicting a 3*d.* surcharge on tutors.

*Editing Courses.*—It is not generally known that a system of correspondence course editors was instituted by the A.A.L. Council about two years ago. An editor was appointed for each of the six subjects for which courses are organized. Four of these editors are, or have been, L.A. examiners in the subjects of the courses they edit. Without interfering with tutors' individual methods of teaching, the editors were asked first and foremost to certify that all A.A.L. courses were of a sufficiently high standard to enable a student who worked through a course to have covered all the ground necessary for the particular examination. Because of their knowledge of the examination scheme, and because they examined all the courses in a particular subject, the editors were able to make valuable suggestions to most of the tutors.

The system of courses editors has obviated the risk taken by the Education Committee when they depended upon recommendations for tutors. A prospective tutor is now asked to draft a course and submit it to the editor, and appointment to the panel of tutors is always dependent upon the editor's report.

*Date of Entry for Courses.*—Criticism is sometimes heard about the date of entry and length of time taken by the correspondence courses. A student who passes the elementary or intermediate examination in December is anxious to commence work for the next part of the syllabus, but finds that a course can only be secured for the examination in the following May twelvemonths. la



## The Library Assistant

his enthusiasm to obtain the Diploma, this student thinks a course should be available for the December immediately after his examination success.

The Education Committee has investigated this point, but it has not been able to devise a plan to meet the objection. Before the introduction of the L.A. Syllabus in 1933, the Committee and tutors gave careful consideration to the requirements of the new examinations. To provide courses that would give satisfactory preparation for the comprehensive demands of each of the new examinations, ten monthly lessons were regarded as a minimum. Both students and tutors deserve a break of at least one month during the summer, and at least one month should be provided for revision after the course is completed and all written work returned to the student.

These circumstances led the Committee to fix the present dates for entry into courses, and to the student who desires thorough preparation for the examination, there is no hardship, although it is recognized that the "exam. crammer" believes he has a grumble.

*The A.A.L. Library.*—Few students in large centres experience difficulty in obtaining textbooks, but students in small centres find the lack of textbooks a constant worry. The latter are able to borrow a large percentage of the books required for a correspondence course from the A.A.L. Library, which is one of the most efficient professional libraries of librarianship in the country. During the last year or two the A.A.L. Finance Committee has very generously increased the grant for the Library, and now it is generally possible to supply any standard examination textbook within a reasonable period.

VICTOR WOODS,

*Chairman, Education and Library Committee.*



## OUR LIBRARY

Headicar, B. M., *A Manual of library organization*, 1935. Library Association, 10s. 6d., to members 8s. 9d.

WHAT a pleasure it is to read a professional textbook by a man who so obviously enjoys what he is doing; who approaches his subject with such vigour and freshness. Most of our textbooks, however sound for their information, lack any semblance of punch or individuality. Those who have heard Mr. Headicar speak (and who has not?) know his chief characteristic to be a perpetually youthful outlook and a capacity to impart his views

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amusingly and with gusto. Not the least service he now renders to professional literature is to prove that the insipid textbook is unnecessary.

There are chapters on legal points; finance; staff and training; conditions of service; buildings and equipment; ventilation, heating, and lighting; the principal departments; special departments; branches and stations; shelving and other furniture; problems of special libraries; book selection; rules and regulations; county and regional libraries, and the ethics of librarianship. The best chapters are those dealing with library equipment and maintenance; the weakest are those on finance and on branches. The descriptions and illustrations of the most recent light fittings for various purposes are especially interesting and valuable, but might have been extended to include details of lighting at some of the new buildings opened during the past year.

On finance Mr. Headicar presents some interesting figures and many wise views, but there is no attempt to rationalize the library budget. This is surely a task of first importance in any library, especially in a new one. It is high time we abandoned rule-of-thumb methods in estimating, and sought a more scientific means of assessing every item of expenditure in relation to the real needs of each library community.

Mr. Headicar's treatment of planning and equipment is particularly welcome. He sees colour and spaciousness, not as ideals to be achieved if the money and space are happily available, but as integrals and essentials. Curiously, he ignores form, as is evident from the illustration, facing page 108, of a ghastly periodical rack. The standard fittings and furniture at present available for English libraries have far to travel before they approach anything worth calling design. When the student consults library supply catalogues, as he is many times recommended to do in this book, he should know that they will teach him what to avoid as much as what to use.

To sum up: the student will find here a conspectus of library organization, mostly fact but with some opinion, fluent and attractive; the old hand will find much new information on important points, and a treatment so liberal and enthusiastic of older principles that it will give him a renewed belief in his job.

R. D. H. S.

*Hansen, Twentieth-century forces in European fiction. A.L.A., 1934. \$2.00.*

To all librarians who look on their fiction stock as more than a collection of potential issues, this book will prove valuable.

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Miss Hansen sets out to analyse tendencies in translated fiction from a sociological angle. To this end over 500 titles of modern European novels are arranged under main headings and minutely classified. Beginning with a short survey of the development of the novel, and ending with a résumé of national literatures, the material is divided under six headings: "Social and economic forces," "Political and racial concepts," "Psychological theories," "The New physics," "The Flight from reality," and "Æsthetic experimentation." These are further subdivided. The result is a full scheme of reading for the methodical; a supplement to sociological studies; a valuable tool for the librarian, and an invaluable aid to literary students.

The care and immense industry that go into a work like this can only compel our admiration. Some books may seem a little squeezed into their compartments (can *Grand hotel* really be an illustration of collectivism?); but it is doubtful if the work could have been better done. Many of the novels may not be of the highest standard; yet most of them illustrate some tendency.

Few books are omitted, and though many of the editions are of necessity American, the book should be of help in fiction selection.

W. B. S.

## THE DIVISIONS

### MIDLAND DIVISION

AT a meeting arranged at Walsall on Wednesday, 6th February, under the auspices of the Joint Committee of the Birmingham and District Branch and the Midland Division of the A.A.L. Section, the attendance was so large (about 130 persons) that the original intention of visiting the clothing factory of Messrs. Stammers, Ltd., had to be modified, to the extent of diverting two-thirds of the party to two other factories, those of Messrs. Shannons and Messrs. Norton & Proffitt. The three parties afterwards converged at the Public Library and Art Gallery.

After an inspection of the Public Library and Art Gallery, the party took tea at the Dora Café, by kind invitation of Alderman A. J. Llewellyn, Chairman of the Public Library and Art Gallery Committee, who extended to the visitors a very cordial welcome, to which the Chairman of the Joint Committee, Mr. A. M. Cashmore (City Librarian, Birmingham), responded.

The proceedings were continued at the Council House, where the Junior

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Meeting was held, under the chairmanship of Mr. F. Mason (Wolverhampton Public Libraries), and Mr. F. N. Bowler (Walsall Public Library) read a paper entitled, "Circulating libraries—public libraries—future." He was of opinion that the "twopenny" libraries had come to stay, and might not restrict their activities to the field of cheap fiction and popular non-fiction. In a machine-minding age we have the problem of less working hours and, for many people, no work at all—the problem of the profitable utilization of leisure. The public library should be the most effective means of giving an educational twist to the recreations of the people, while retaining the joys that belong to recreation. It should foster interest in the arts and crafts. Popular fiction is ceasing to be a bait designed to lead on readers to higher things; the circulating libraries are better able than the public library to supply it in profusion, and the latter must adopt other means of establishing contact with people. A propaganda service should be organized on national lines. Every endeavour should be made to make the people "public-library conscious."

Some dozen speakers contributed to the discussion which followed, and opinion was, as usual, divided as to the need for more publicity of various kinds and the justification for making public libraries more educational and less recreational.

The proceedings ended with the expression of cordial thanks to the Walsall Public Library and Art Gallery Committee, and to Mr. F. S. Price, the Borough Librarian, who, with characteristic modesty, had made admirable arrangements for the meeting and then resolutely effaced himself.

### YORKSHIRE DIVISION

A successful and well-attended meeting of the Division was held at Leeds on the 24th October. The members assembled at the Central Library, and the proceedings began with a tour of inspection of the recently reconstructed Central Lending Library and Administration Departments. A notable feature of the lending library is the turn-table charge, which created great interest and received universal admiration as an ingenious solution of the difficulty of placing a staff enclosure in a comparatively restricted area. After the inspection of the library the members were conducted to the Civic Hall, where they were received by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress and entertained to tea.

The Evening Session was held at the Civic Hall, the President, Mr. H. W. Marr, presiding. Mr. R. J. Gordon, F.L.A. (City Librarian, Leeds), gave an

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address, "Impressions of American libraries," an interesting account of a recent tour of America. Most things in the United States are big; cities, buildings, rivers, lakes, and trains are huge. No less enormous are the public libraries in most of the larger cities. To American eyes, accustomed to numerous high-storeyed buildings, these fine library buildings may not appear so tremendously large, but to the party of English librarians who recently had the good fortune to participate in a delightful tour of the States, they certainly did.

Work with children was much more highly specialized than in this country. Americanization of the foreign-born was largely done through the library service, a fact which partially accounted for the readiness of American taxpayers to support public libraries so generously.

Since his return, Mr. Gordon had frequently been asked if he was discouraged at his work after the splendour of the American systems. On the contrary, Mr. Gordon was satisfied that, allowing for the great difference in income, the Leeds system is doing work comparable with the best American libraries. After all, it is books, not bricks nor even marble, that make the library.

A hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Gordon for his address was carried with acclamation.

### SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE DIVISION

THE most successful meeting the Division has yet held, and certainly the best attended, was the verdict of many members who attended the meeting on 23rd January at Swansea. In the afternoon the members were taken on a tour of the new Guildhall, in which the Empire Panels of Frank Brangwyn are now housed, and were entertained to tea by the Mayor of Swansea, Alderman W. J. Davies, J.P. Replying to a vote of thanks moved by the retiring Chairman of the Division, Mr. G. C. Poole, the Mayor promised that he would do all in his power to extend the Swansea Library and obtain a larger book-fund.

At the evening meeting held at the Library, the speaker was Mr. L. R. McColvin, the Hon. Secretary of the Library Association, who spoke on "The Work of the Library Association," and who was supported by Mr. Welsford. In his address Mr. McColvin traced the growth of the Association, showing how the education of assistants was catered for, and stated that the strength of the Association, and not its weakness, as many members thought, lay in the wide scope of its charter. The ensuing discussion was prolonged and keen,

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but it was noticeable that coming events were casting their shadows, and many members, fearing that by amalgamation the Division would cease to exist, were anxious to learn what would be its substitute. All phases of the work of the Association were touched upon, and the Division is deeply indebted to Mr. McColvin and Mr. Welsford for their kindness in answering the many questions of the members.

Prior to Mr. McColvin's address, Mr. Poole welcomed Mr. W. W. Young, Joint-Librarian, Swansea, to the Chairmanship of the Division.

Members are reminded that the March meeting of the Division will be held at Pontypridd on Wednesday, the 20th, when Mr. E. Austin Hinton, Chief Librarian, Coventry, will speak on "Recent developments in children's library work."

## NEW MEMBERS

**CENTRAL.**—V. L. Arnold (Chippenham); W. O. Bates (Bristol University); Elsie W. Brayley, Joan G. Burgess, Ellen L. Clarke, Jeanne F. Davis, Dorothy K. Galpin, Lavalla R. Hill, Norman T. Piper, Phyllis M. Stephens, Edith A. Strike (Bristol); J. S. Burden (Bath); Miss A. H. Christiansen (Wimbledon); Clara Draper (Workington); Miss E. M. Holt (Seven Kings); Tertius G. Hutt (43 Hartington Grove, Cambridge); Ronald Ley (Exeter); W. H. T. Mabey (Brighton); Henry McCall (Mitchell Library, Glasgow); Miss M. L. Mason (Luton); Miss Winifred Mellor (Croydon); F. J. Message (Woolwich); Isobel R. Milne, Lilius J. Tait (Edinburgh); S. W. Newson (Upper Norwood); Joan Simmonds (Hendon); Miss V. M. Taylor (Raynes Park); Norman H. Viney (Hampstead); Miss C. E. Whetham (Seven Kings).

**Midland.**—Gerald M. Altman, Eric J. Belton, K. Evans-Baseley, Miss T. M. King, Miss J. Lawrence, Miss J. B. Stephenson (Leicester); Miss D. M. Edwards, Miss G. M. House, Arthur D. Thomas (Birmingham). *Obituary.*—On the 28th January, Miss Beatrice Eyre, Assistant Alvaston Branch Library, Derby, 1920-1935.

**North-Eastern.**—George Eltringham (Whickham Branch, Dunston-on-Tyne).

**North-Western.**—Margaret Blincoe (Chester); M. Haytock (Levenshulme, Manchester).

**South Wales.**—Miss E. Williams (Conway).

**Yorkshire Division.**—Frank C. Hirst (Shipley); Miss A. M. Marshall (Woodhouse Moor, Leeds); F. C. Tighe (Doncaster).

## The Library Assistant

### COUNCIL NOTES

THE Council met on 16th January, and various topics of interest came up for discussion.

A resolution was carried, requesting the Library Association to amend the regulations regarding the 1934 Preliminary Examination. The Programme Secretary reported that he had received a number of essays for the competition "County Libraries in 1950," and that Messrs. Osborne and Oliph Smith were to act as assessors.

The Education Committee are to circulate a leaflet of "Instructions to Students," and are considering the provision of revision courses for the Intermediate Examination. The Forward Policy Committee gave information on a suggested library publicity film. The details were forwarded to the Library Association.

The Council discussed plans for speakers and subjects at the A.A.L. sessions of the 1935 Conference, and papers on "Amalgamation" and "The Public library in the social survey" will probably be given.

W. B. S.



### CORRESPONDENCE

THE NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY,

MALET PLACE, LONDON, W.C.1.

THE EDITOR,

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

5th February, 1935.

DEAR SIR,—

I note that in his letter in the February number of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT Mr. Muskett, in referring to the Yorkshire Regional System, states that a "ruling given by the National Central Library compels a library to join the scheme."

The National Central Library has never given any ruling which would in any sense compel a library to join a regional system. Indeed, it has no power to do so, even if it wished to. In correspondence with Mr. Muskett last autumn, I pointed out, in reply to a question he raised, that a library standing outside its regional system obtains a poorer service than one which is co-operating, as such a library has access only to the stock of the National Central

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Library and to those of its Outlier Libraries which are not also in regional systems; whereas, a co-operating library has access, not only to the National Central Library's own stock and the Outlier Libraries, but also to the very large and important group of libraries associated with regional systems.

The constitution of each regional library system contains a clause to the effect that co-operation shall be established with other regional library systems, but it is obvious that libraries assisting in the regional library movement could not lend books to libraries unwilling to lend in return. This, however, does not compel a library to join a regional system.

Yours faithfully,

L. NEWCOMBE,

*Librarian.*

THE EDITOR,  
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

NORBURY LIBRARY, BEATRICE AVENUE,  
LONDON ROAD, S.W.16.

11th February, 1935.

### "CATERING FOR THE ADOLESCENT"

I should like to express my thanks to Mr. Austin Hinton for his helpful and friendly criticism of my notes. It makes my regret at not having inspected Coventry's methods "at the fountain head" all the greater, but a personal visit was, and is at the moment, impracticable.

I should not, perhaps, have relied on a printed report to the extent that I did; still, I would vindicate myself by saying that the method is commonly enough used. With regard to its being five years old: I used the one for 1929 because I understood that it contained the most detailed account of the work with intermediates at Coventry. If any of the succeeding reports contain material which sheds further light on our subject, I should be very grateful to Mr. Hinton if he could spare me copies.

At the same time, I realize, on reading through my third article once again, that my words could be interpreted as meaning that Coventry no longer took any great interest in adolescents and "school-leavers." I hope Mr. Hinton will believe in my good faith when I state that it was certainly not my intention to convey such an impression; and I tender my sincerest apologies for any misconception that may have been created.



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Still, I'm glad at having persuaded one of our leading librarians to express himself at length on the question at issue, even at the cost of a little fleecing!

Yours, etc.,

SIDNEY W. ANDERSON.

CENTRAL LIBRARY, HIGH STREET,

WALTHAMSTOW, E.17.

12th February, 1935.

THE EDITOR,

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

SIR,—

I have followed with interest the correspondence relating to the provision of "intermediate departments" in public libraries, having had some responsibility for the experiment which was introduced here years ago, to meet a particular local difficulty which may or may not arise elsewhere. The effort proved to meet that case and continues to do so.

I am drawn to this letter by Mr. Hinton's remark that "in no very large library in this country is such a department provided." It may be so. Does it really matter? Must we do just that which the "very large" libraries do, and, if so, which are the "very large" libraries? Would the librarians responsible for them endorse the assumption that anything outside their normal practice was without value? They would be the last to make such claims.

I would respectfully suggest that a librarian is expected to study his local needs and to make such provision as he thinks best suited to meet them. If they succeed, he is justified in maintaining them; if not, the measure of his capacity is judged by his willingness to withdraw a scheme which does not meet his aims. It should not concern him whether others follow his example or consider his methods questionable. He should know best what he is attempting to do and how far he is succeeding. Librarianship has not yet reached the position where a stereotyped method of practice will succeed in every place, and it may be that the future usefulness of our institutions will be enhanced by the readiness of librarians to try out the notions which may seem likely to help them.

It so happens that Walthamstow continues to run an "intermediate" department and Coventry discontinues such a scheme. And why not? Perhaps there is a system of "schools libraries" at Coventry; there is no such system here. Local circumstances should always weigh in the argument, and who should know these better than the officer immediately concerned. So

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long as types of public, standards of culture, conditions of living, housing, and employment differ in various places, it is not sensible to dispute the virtues of efforts made to meet the varied conditions. The deciding factor should be how far a library system is fulfilling its purpose. It might even prove that the not very large libraries with their many and varied methods of approach to their job are, in the main, as satisfactorily administered as the "very large" libraries, which have no reason to adopt methods others may find useful or necessary. It is no argument.

Coventry's libraries, or any others, are best run on lines which the local officers have proved by experience to be most suited to their purposes. Let us discuss those lines of practice, by all means, but in so doing let us endeavour to grasp the reason for their introduction. It makes all the difference.

Yours faithfully,

GEO. ED. ROEBUCK.

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